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POLANDS CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

INTRO:

AN EXHIBIT OF PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWING THE PROGRESS OF POLES IN THE UNITED STATES HAS OPENED IN LUBLIN AT POLANDS CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY. VOA'S RON PEMSTEIN, ON A RECENT VISIT TO POLAND STOPPED BY TO SEE THE EXHIBIT AND SENT THE FOLLOWING REPORT ON THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN.

VOICE:

THE STUDY OF RELIGION IS THE REASON POLISH UNIVERSITIES BEGAN BUT THEOLOGY DEPARTMENTS HAVE DISAPPEARED NOW FROM CRACOWS JAGELLONIAN UNIVERSITY OR WARSAW UNIVERSITY. THE COMMUNIST LEADER OF POLAND, WHILE RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURC AMONG THE THIRTY-FIVE MILLION POLES, GIVE RELIGION THE LOWEST EDUCATIONAL PRIORITY.

BUT HERE, JUST EIGHTY KILOMETERS FROM THE SOVIET FRONTIER, IS A SMALL UNIVERSITY DEVOTED TO WHAT ITS DIRECTORS CALL "POLANDS ONE THOUSAND YEAR CULTURE."

"WE DO NOT MEAN THE NOBLES TRADITION," SAYS THE RECTOR, FATHER MIECZYSLAW KRAPIEC (PRONOUNCED KRON-PEACH). "WE MEAN PROTECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN, WESTERN EUROPEAN CULTURE OF POLAND."

AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN, MARXISM IS TAUGHT ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF COMPARISON. THERES NO DEPARTMENT FOR IT. BESIDES THEOLOGY, THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY GIVES DEGREES IN SUBJECTS SUCH AS HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND FINE ARTS. "STUDENTS DO NOT COME HERE TO BECOME FIRST SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY," FATHER KRAPIEC SAID, "THEY COME HERE TO LEARN SOMETHING THEY CANNOT GET ANYPLACE ELSE."

COMPETITION FOR PLACES AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IS FIERCE. OF ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-ONE OPENINGS LAST YEAR, THERE WERE SEVEN

HUNDRED TWENTY-EIGHT CANDIDATES. IN RETURN FOR ACCREDITING THE UNIVERSITY, THE POLISH GOVERNMENT SETS THE PROGRAM FOR ALL COURSES EXCEPT THEOLOGY AND CANON LAW. THE STATE ALSO ESTABLISHES THE NUMBER OF PLACES AVAILABLE FOR LAY STUDENTS IN EACH FACULTY.

BUT UNLIKE ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD, THE PROFESSORS AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY HAVE COMPLETE FREEDOM TO TEACH THEIR SUBJECTS IN THEIR OWN WAY, THE LIMITED NUMBER OF STUDENTS ALLOWS FOR A CLOSE STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO. THAT'S ONE FACTOR WHICH MAKES ENTRANCE TO CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY SO COMPETITIVE.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY REMAINED EVEN DURING THE STALINIST ERA IN POLAND WHEN SUBJECTS TABOO ELSEWHERE WERE TAUGHT IN LUBLIN. ONE STUDENT SAID THE UNIVERSITY'S RECORD DURING THE NINETEEN FIFTIES IS THE REASON HE WAS ATTRACTED HERE.

FUNDING IS ONE REASON THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY REMAINS INDEPENDENT. IT RECEIVES NO STATE MONEY. POLAND'S CATHOLIC CHURCHES DEVOTE FIVE SUNDAY COLLECTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY'S SUPPORT ALONG WITH LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM POLES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

A NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES IN POLAND HAVE HAD SO-CALLED FLYING UNIVERSITIES SPROUT UP ON THEIR EDGES. DISSIDENT PROFESSORS HAVE TRIED TO TEACH SUBJEC THAT CANNOT BE DISCUSSED AT THE NORMAL POLISH UNIVERSITY. THERE'S BEEN NO FLYING UNIVERSITY AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN. IN FACT, THE SCHOOL HAS SUPPLIED THE RAW MATERIAL WITH SIX OF ITS PROFESSORS TEACHING ILLEGAL COURSE AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES. "THIS MAKES SOME DIFFICULTIES FOR ME WITH THE AUTHORITIES," FATHER KRAPIEC SAID WITH A BROAD SMILE.

FATHER KRAPIEC PROUDLY OPEND A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT ON THE LIFE OF POLES IN HE UNITED STATES." THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE FOR THIS EXHIBIT," HE SAID, "FOR HERE WE STUDY THE LIVES OF POLES ABROAD." THE WHOLE EMPHASIS OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN SEEMS TO BE ON POLAND AND THE WEST.

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